



South Western High School

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“.... A Good Place To Be!”

Mr. Brian A. Gallagher
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To Whom It May Concern:

After hosting Michael Despines at South Western High School to present “The American Dream – The World’s Nightmare,” we highly recommend Mr. Despines for this or any other presentation. We clearly saw while watching him speak that Mr. Despines is an expert with a passion for his field of work, and his message about society and the environment is imperative for all students, teachers and citizens to understand.

From a student's perspective, Mr. Despines was one of the most engaging environmental speakers I have heard. Our audience consisted of about seventy students, and most of them arrived expecting a boring lecture – distant facts and statistics that weren’t very relevant to them. What they found, however, was a down-to-earth presenter who directly showed them how the environmental crisis affects their lives and vice versa. And he did so through metaphors, stories, and personal experience, making his message something real and tangible, and interesting to listen to. His scientific data was simplified enough for students of all levels to understand, and he consistently returned to his central theme, clarifying and reinforcing his message. The seventy students who attended left not only with a clear understanding of society’s impact on the environment, but also with a sense of enthusiasm about making personal choices to help the environmental movement.

From a teacher’s perspective, Mr. Despines’ presentation was well worthwhile. His message is one that is so very important for the upcoming generation to hear, but also one that unfortunately gets brushed out of the science classroom curriculum to make room for materials that will appear on standardized tests. Mr. Despines’ session was a great way to offer our students this information that will affect such a large part of their futures. And importantly, his message was non-political, as his reasons for being concerned about sustainability stretched beyond climate change and global warming to include economic consequence and potential benefits. Mr. Despines appealed to a broad audience and brought valuable information to our students.

Working with Mr. Despines was a pleasure, as he was flexible and adjusted his presentation to fit our needs. We look forward to having him back at South Western in the near future, and would recommend him to any group looking for a presentation that gives a relevant and holistic understanding of our society’s role in the environment.

Sincerely,

Sarah Cashdollar
Student Council President

Kyle Kauffman
Student Council Advisor